



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Collection sites near Okanogan, Twisp and Orondo

Sign up by September 10 for free disposal at the North Central Washington Pesticide Round-Up

OLYMPIA — Residents, farmers, business owners and public agencies can safely dispose of old or unusable agricultural and commercial grade pesticides without paying any hazardous waste disposal fees at the North Central Washington Pesticide Round-Up. The round-up includes collection events near Okanogan on Oct. 12, Twisp on Oct. 13 and Orondo on Oct. 14. This will be the first time that a pesticide collection site is located in the Methow Valley. The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) sponsors the Pesticide Round-Up in cooperation with local agencies and businesses. To participate, you must sign up by Sept. 10.

Because walk-in customers cannot be served, only those who sign up by Sept. 10 will receive directions to the site, hours of operation, and needed transportation documents. To sign up, call (360) 902-2056, toll free (877) 301-4555 or send e-mail to wastepesticide@agr.wa.gov.

Pesticides accepted by WSDA include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides and most chemicals that kill, repel or prevent unwanted pests. Empty containers and other waste, such as fertilizers, motor oil and household hazardous waste, are not accepted for disposal by this program. For information on how to dispose or recycle these other items, contact your local solid waste department. In addition, NW Ag Plastics, Inc. (509-961-8524 or www.nwagplastics.com) operates a free recycling program for empty plastic pesticide containers.

Leaky containers or improper pesticide disposal may create serious health problems for humans and animals, contaminate drinking water supplies or cause significant environmental damage. It is also very expensive and difficult to clean up contaminated soil or water. These problems can be prevented by proper disposal of pesticides that are no longer needed. WSDA will provide customers with supplies necessary to protect broken or leaky containers to ensure safe transportation to the collection site.

WSDA also provides a disposal opportunity for persons who are quitting business or selling property and are stuck with pesticides they will never use. In some cases, a storage room containing pesticides can delay a property transaction or reduce the property's value.

"In many instances new property owners have found jugs, cans or drums of unknown substances left behind by the previous owner," said Joe Hoffman, WSDA disposal program coordinator. "A mystery container with unknown contents may be the most hazardous feature of your new property, especially if you have curious

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children or the container is leaking. We will help to identify the contents and, if it is a pesticide, we will arrange to have it removed at no cost to you."

In most cases, customers transport their unusable and unwanted pesticides to the collection site where WSDA takes possession of them and a hazardous waste contractor packs them for safe and legal transportation and disposal. WSDA oversees collection in cooperation with local agencies and businesses.

"We are responsible for the pesticides once we take possession of them," Hoffman added. "WSDA becomes the owner of the pesticides before they are turned over to the waste contractor which makes WSDA the hazardous waste generator of record. Customer names do not appear on any manifests or disposal documents. That is significant because hazardous waste generators are usually responsible for life for the cost of disposal or any environmental cleanup that may be needed should a transportation accident or disposal site release occur."

"We've been responsible for disposing over 1.5 million pounds of pesticides from all around the state," Mike McCormick, WSDA pesticide disposal specialist from Yakima says. "As a grower myself, I know there are pesticides no longer being used that farmers want to remove from their property. We also provide on-site assistance, when requested, or refer the person to another resource if he or she is unable to identify the materials or needs assistance in packaging or inventorying items. "

WSDA has sponsored regional collection events at various locations around the state since the program began in 1988. To date, 5,035 customers have properly disposed of 1,627,774 pounds of waste pesticides.

In addition to calling or using e-mail to sign up for the Pesticide Round-Up, you may write to the Waste Pesticide Program, Washington State Department of Agriculture, PO Box 42589, Olympia, WA 98504-2589. For more information, visit WSDA's Web site at <http://agr.wa.gov/PestFert/Pesticides/WastePesticide.htm> .

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